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## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

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Local Government Center • 60 Community Drive  
Augusta, Maine 04330-9486  
1-800-452-8786 (In Maine) • 207-623-8428  
Fax 207-626-5947

Date: April 5, 2017

To: Senator Davis, Senate Chair  
Representative Martin, House Chair  
And members of the State and Local Government Committee

From: Kathy Montejo, Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association  
City Clerk, City of Lewiston

Re: LD 1058 – An Act To Modernize Ballot Notices for City Elections

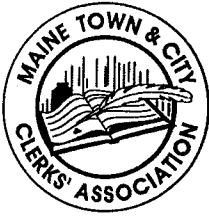
Position: SUPPORT

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association is in full SUPPORT of LD 1058 for several reasons and we thank you for the opportunity to outline our points for your Committee. We asked Representative Hamann to sponsor this bill on our behalf and we appreciate his support in presenting this for us this morning.

The present law requires cities in Maine to place an advertisement in the newspaper that is a composite specimen ballot containing the names of the candidates for local office. This bill would eliminate that requirement on cities.

We are in favor of LD 1058 for the following reasons:

- 1) ONLY FOR CITIES AND NOT TOWNS - This requirement only applies to Maine cities and not Maine towns. There are about 492 municipalities in Maine, and of these, only 23 are cities. As such, only about 5% of all Maine communities are required to place these ads. In our attempts to research this requirement, some people have surmised that since city elections are defined in a separate section of the statutes, this language was removed from the main election section of Title 30-A many years ago and it was simply an oversight to not remove this language from the section pertaining to city elections. (Attached is a listing of the 23 cities in Maine.)
- 2) LOCAL EXPENSE - These advertisements can be quite expensive for cities. In a poll of all cities, the average cost for this ad was between \$300-\$500.



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- 3) AVAILABLE FROM OTHER SOURCES - The information regarding the names of candidates running for elected city office is available in other formats other than our paid advertisement. All Maine cities have municipal websites and we place sample ballots on our websites for the voters to review. Newspapers conduct candidate interviews and run candidate profiles. Candidates place numerous advertisements in their local paper. Local cable television stations may run candidate debates and forums. Many candidates go door-to-door distributing campaign literature. I would assert that there are many ways for city voters to know in advance of election day the names of candidates running for local office in their community and the absence of this ad will not disenfranchise voters.
- 4) SAMPLE BALLOT - Any voter is welcome to contact their city hall and pick up a sample ballot or have one mailed them.
- 5) OPTION FOR CITIES – If this bill passes, cities could still choose to run this type of advertisement if they are interested in doing so.

For these reasons noted above, and for the fact that approximately 95% of municipalities in Maine do not have to run this type of advertisement, we are in Support of LD 1058.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments today with the Committee. The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association appreciates the opportunity to share its testimony with the Committee. Should any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at 513-3124 or by email: [kmontejo@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:kmontejo@lewistonmaine.gov)